

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16356

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET CHAPTER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PLANS EXPANSION

1. SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE MOSCOW CHAPTER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAVE TOLD US IN THE LAST FEW DAYS OF PLANS TO OPEN A SECOND SOVIET CHAPTER - THIS ONE IN KIEV. AT PRESENT, ONE KIEVAN, THE DISSIDENT UKRAINIAN POET MIKOLA RUDENKO, IS A MEMBER OF THE MOSCOW CHAPTER. HE IS THE ORGANIZER OF THE KIEV CHAPTER AND TELLS US THAT THERE ARE SOME SIX TO EIGHT PEOPLE LIVING IN KIEV WHO ARE PREPARED TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE KIEV CHAPTER.

2. THE KIEV CHAPTER HOPES TO BE OPERATING WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. WHILE IT WILL IN PRINCIPLE BE CO-EQUAL WITH MOSCOW, IN FACT MOSCOW DISSIDENTS, WITH THEIR VASTLY BETTER ACCESS TO WESTERNERS, WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR THE KIEV CHAPTER.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE KIEV CHAPTER, SOME THOUGHT IS BEING GIVEN, WE UNDERSTAND, TO OPENING A THIRD CHAPTER OF AMNESTY - THIS TIME IN LENINGRAD. PLANS ARE LESS WELL ADVANCED, PRIMARILY BECAUSE IT IS DIFFICULT TO GET MEMBERS OF THE LENINGRAD DISSIDENT COMMUNITY TO AGREE ON THE DESIRABILITY "OF TAKING THE AMNESTY ROUTE." ALSO, OUR SOURCES REPORT, LENINGRAD DISSIDENTS ARE MUCH MORE CLOSELY WATCHED
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THAN ARE THOSE IN EITHER MOSCOW OR KIEV. IT IS TOO

EARLY, OUR SOURCES SAY, TO BE SURE THAT THE LENINGRADERS
WILL SUCCEED IN ESTABLISHING THEIR CHAPTER.

4. LYUDA ALEKSEYEVA, A MEMBER OF THE MOSCOW CHAPTER,
EXPLAINED THAT THE OPENING OF A SECOND BRANCH IN THE
SOVIET UNION WAS IMPORTANT SYMBOLICALLY ON SEVERAL COUNTS.
FOR ONE THING, THERE WAS A LARGE, THUS FAR UNFOCUSED
UKRAINIAN DISSIDENCE WHICH DESERVED TO OBTAIN RECOGNITION.
FOR A SECOND THING, THE AMNESTY MEMBERS FEEL THAT THEIR
CHANCES OF SURVIVAL ARE GREATER IF THE AUTHORITIES FEEL
THEY ARE CONFRONTED WITH CENTERS ELSEWHERE THAN IN MOSCOW.
THE KIEV CHAPTER IS ALSO IMPORTANT, SHE SAID, BECAUSE IT
IS THE ONLY RECENT STEP TOWARD A INCREASED SOVIET
DISSIDENT ACTIVITY AND AS SUCH IS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO
RECENT TRENDS IN THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT, WHICH HAVE BEEN
TOWARD LESS ACTIVITY. SHE SAID SHE REALIZED THAT THE
KIEV CHAPTER WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH
LITTLE.

5. COMMENT: IF THE KIEV CHAPTER GETS OFF THE GROUND
(WHICH IS BY NO MEANS SURE) ITS IMPORTANCE CAN ONLY
BY SYMBOLIC. THE SMALL NUMBER OF FOREIGNERS AND THE
ABSENCE OF RESIDENT NEWSMEN IN KIEV WILL MAKE IT MUCH MORE
DIFFICULT FOR THE LOCAL MEMBERS TO GAIN THE PUBLICITY
WHICH THEY NEED IN ORDER TO INSURE AT LEAST SOME SAFETY.
PRESUMABLY, THE APPROACH TO BELGRADE'S CSCE REVIEW
CONFERENCE MAKES THE AMNESTY MEMBERS FEEL THAT THEIR
CHANCES OF SURVIVAL WILL BE SLIGHTLY GREATER THAN WOULD
NORMALLY BE THE CASE.

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